

Recovery

by IAmThePoisonedYouth

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Summary: Post TWS, Steve never thinks he'll see Bucky again. But when he learns of a new patient at the local hospital, he learns how wrong he is.

Recovery

Approximately three months after losing his best friend Bucky for what felt like the millionth time, Steve Rogers had begun to lose hope. Despite all his urgency to retain it, he was unable to deny as the days passed by, it slipped away, just like Bucky had.

He ached to be with him, to help him through whatever he was going through - the stuff of nightmares, Steve was sure.

The days ticked away and he couldn't stop the overwhelming sadness he felt when the realisation hit him that Bucky was never going to come back, not again. He needed to drown in whiskey, just like they would do before he got the damned serum, before he became this.

Before he let himself be torn down by the loss of a man who had been dead for over eighty years.

He sighed shakily, looking at an old newspaper clipping with Bucky on it, using all of his strength to not shatter into millions of tiny pieces.

Oh, how he loved him.

Bucky had been more than a friend, more than a lover. He had been everything to Steve, his entire world. And when he saw him fall off that train, his heart died with him, and he didn't want to live any longer.

Shakespeare always took Juliet first, and whilst he seldom would've admitted it, Bucky was the Juliet of the pair, more innocent.

And just like Romeo and Juliet, they were on opposed sides. Bucky came back, a derivative from the script, but not as himself. No, he was an asset to Hydra, every part of the person he was buried beneath a rock-hard grave.

And Steve had tried - _God, he'd tried - _to break through that ground, only to lose him once more.

So, here he was, curling up on his bed, feeling tears prick his eyes as a sob escaped him, longing to hold Bucky, to fix him, to taste his lips once more in his lifetime.

But that wasn't to be. Heroes didn't get happy endings, their lives were simply bathed in tragedy, death taking and taking and taking until in the end, the hero begs it to claim him too. Not one hero was ever truly happy, not ever.

The following morning, Steve was woken up harshly by a knocking at his apartment door. His eyes cracked open and he was forced to rub them due to the soreness caused by his crying in his sleep, a habit he had recently been acquitted to.

The relentless knocking continued and Steve listlessly got to his feet before shambling to the door, calling, "Alright, alright! _I get it, geez!" _he unlocked the door and opened it to see Natasha standing with Clint, both with looks of extreme concern etched onto their faces.

"What is it?" Steve asked after a few seconds of their gaping, "Guys?"

Natasha looked anxious, an unusual emotion upon her face as she was usually so headstrong, "You might wanna come with us."

"Where?" Steve narrowed his eyes, confused.

Clint demanded, "Just get dressed, we'll explain when we get there."

Steve rolled his eyes before heading back into his apartment.

When Clint's car pulled up outside a local hospital, the confusion in Steve reached a complete high and he snapped, "Okay, tell me what the hell is going on, now!"

"Fine." Natasha sighed, "Sam was in the hospital earlier, visiting a friend and he noticed in the same ward, a new patient was there. A patient going by the name of James Barnes."

Steve gasped, relief swelling up in him, "_Bucky." _

"Yeah, but that ain't the whole of it." Clint stated, "He was in for an overdose on sleeping pills. Suicide attempt, they think. The guy was almost dead when he got there. They also were confused about the metal arm thing."

The relief darkened into poison as Steve tried to imagine Bucky attempting suicide, the image too heartbreaking for him to bear.

His voice was cracked as he announced, "I gotta see him."

"Then go." Natasha rested a hand on his shoulder, "We'll let you have some alone time with him."

Steve asked, "You sure?"

"Yep." Natasha nodded, "Besides, somebody owes me a date." she signalled to Clint, "Sam's phone call interrupted us this morning."

As he walked down the corridors, desperately trying to remember the ward number the receptionist had told him, Steve felt his heartbeat increase so it was racing in his chest and sweat was forming in his palms.

He walked into Bucky's room, seeing that he was lying asleep on the bed. It made him stop in his tracks as he trailed his eyes over him, studying him. His hair was short again, like it had been when he was still innocent, before Hydra had invaded and consumed him.

The entire world seemed to slow down with each painful moment as Steve sat down in a chair beside Bucky's bed, frowning over at the IV needle that was stuck into the back of his normal hand, drops of fluid being put into his body to try and save his life.

It horrified Steve to think how much drugs Bucky had taken, considering the fact that he had survived the train fall (barely). It broke his heart.

Steve took Bucky's metal hand, frowning at the texture of it, not used to feeling it so rough against his skin.

Eventually, Bucky began to rouse, his eyes flickering open as he moaned in pain, a metallic taste stuck in his mouth. As soon as he turned his head, he knew Steve was always going to be there, sticking with him even though he should've been running the other way.

"Stâ€| Steve." he choked out, "I-I'm sorry."

Steve cupped his cheek, gently stroking his thumb across it, "You don't need to apologise."

"Yes I do." tears filled Bucky's eyes and spilled down his cheeks as he hiccupped a sob hoarsely, "I remember everything. _Everything. _All the people I killed, the look in their eyes as I took their lives. Steve, I tried to kill _you."_

Steve pressed his forehead to Bucky's, "It wasn't your fault. It was Hydra. They did this to you, they hurt you."

"_Steveâ€|" _was all Bucky could manage before it all became too much and he broke down in sobs, sobs of shame and grief, mourning the man he used to be before Hydra got to him.

Steve pressed his lips to the top of Bucky's head, allowing him to cling to him as he sobbed out some of the pain he had felt over the

past - not all, no, that would take months, years, perhaps the rest of Bucky's life to get through.

Half an hour passed, and a nurse came to check on him, seeming a tiny bit shocked that Steve was there, recognising him from the news as a blush rose up to her cheeks.

"Um, is e-everything okay here?" the nurse asked.

Steve nodded, "I was just wondering when my friend here was being released."

"Well, we need to clarify that he won't try this again." she saw the almost puppyish look that crested on Bucky's face and gave a gentle laugh, "Oh, honeyâ€¦ You'll be okay, I just need to know you'll be okay. You've healed up pretty well."

Bucky promised, "I won't overdose again. I promise."

When Natasha and Clint picked them up from the hospital the next day, the redhead greeted Steve with a soft smile as he walked Bucky to the car, one arm around his waist for support.

Bucky ducked his head from Natasha's eyes, remembering stabbing, shooting and trying to murder her and shame arose in him as he sat down next to Steve, his face buried in the others' shoulder.

"You try and kill my girl again and I'll shove an arrow up your ass, by the way." Clint snarked.

Natasha leant over and pecked his cheek, "That's enough, Clint."

"Just sayin'." he shrugged.

Steve's apartment was surprisingly peaceful when Natasha and Clint dropped them off, not a sound coming from Sharon's home next door, just the plain, peaceful serenity of loneliness as Bucky shedded his jacket.

He frowned when he saw Steve's unevenly painted wall and thought about how he had _killed _Nick Fury and yet people still seemed to be able to look at him without emptying a barrel straight into his skull.

"Hey." Steve's arms linked around his waist and Bucky rested his head back against his lover's shoulder, "What you thinking about?"

Bucky replied, "Natasha. She doesn't hate me."

"Nat has been through alot herself, she's been brainwashed, turned into an assassin." Steve explained, and he felt Bucky turn around to face him still enveloped in his embrace, "She knows what you're going through."

Bucky gave a faint smile, "Why are you being so nice to me? After everythingâ€¦"

"That wasn't you." Steve corrected, then rested his forehead against Bucky's, both of their bodies swaying to an unheard melody, "And of

course I'm going to help you through it, I love you."

Bucky looked slightly taken aback by that, then with a burst of confidence, seized Steve's face between his hands and pulled him into a passionate and long overdue kiss. It was a kiss of fire, tongues dancing against each other as they remembered each other's rhythm, Steve pulling Bucky closer by his waist.

Steve pulled away before the kiss could go any further, leaving Bucky looking slightly disappointed, but then he explained, "Not tonight. Tonightâ€¦ I just wanna hold you, to know this is really happening and isn't a dream."

"Okay." Bucky agreed, then pulled Steve back down for a brief, but still as passionate kiss, and when he pulled away, he whispered, "I love you too, by the way."

Steve smiled, trying to ignore the irony that two days previous he was driven to tears from the prospect of never seeing Bucky anymore, and now, he was here, in the flesh, able to touch and kiss and hold.

As they rested on the sofa together, Bucky shuffling a couple of times so that he didn't accidentally elbow Steve with his metallic arm and cause several injuries and also for comfort until finally, they found a position to cuddle in that wasn't dangerous or painful.

Steve turned on the television, feeling the little hitched breath of surprise that escaped Bucky and almost forgot that besides from being the Winter Soldier, Bucky hadn't probably seen a television before. He gripped his hand, and thanked whatever deity (although he hoped it wasn't Thor, the guy had his hammer shoved too far up his backside in his opinion) had blessed him with this opportunity.

He knew that Bucky wasn't out of the woods yet, but was on his way to recovery. And that was good.

End
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